

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7520

INFO RUMJKL / AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR IMMEDIATE 354

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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (C H A N G E D O W N G R A D I N G I N S T R U C T I O N S)

E. O. 11652: XGDS 1

TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN, MY

SUBJECT: ROK/MALAYSIAN RELATIONS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 1721

SUMMARY. ROKG HAS TOLD MALAYSIA (GOM) THROUGH GOM AMBASSADOR
IN SEOUL THAT MALAYSIA MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN PYONGYANG AND SEOUL.
END SUMMARY.

1. MOFA ASIAN AFFAIRS BUREAU DIRECTOR CHI HAS TOLD US THAT
PRESIDENT PARK WITH FONMIN PRESENT CALLED IN MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR
AT 1500 HOURS AND TOLD HIM MALAYSIAN RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA
COULD ONLY DISTURB SOUTH- NORTH DIALOGUE WHICH IS AT A CRUCIAL
STAGE. ACCORDINGLY, HE HOPED AND TRUSTED THAT PM RAZAK WOULD
RE- CONSIDER MOVE WHICH COULD IMPEDE SUCCESS OF
THE TALKS. HE SAID SEVERAL RECENT INCIDENTS PUBLICLY KNOWN SHOW
THAT THE THREAT OF NORTH KOREAN BELLIGERENCE REMAINS.
AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE WOULD CONVEY THE PRESIDENT' S STATE-
MENTS TO HIS GOVERNMENT PROMPTLY. MOFA SAID HE LATER OBSERVED

PRIVATELY THAT HE HAD EXPECTED THE PRESIDENT TO ASK HIM TO PACK
UP AND GO HOME.

2. AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT, FONMIN AND AMBASSADOR
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 02631 270702 Z

PROCEEDED TO FORMER'S OFFICE WHERE FONMIN IN FAIRLY BLUNT TERMS TOLD AMBASSADOR MALAYSIA MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN PYONGYANG AND SEOUL. AMBASSADOR REPLIED, WE ARE TOLD, THAT MALAYSIA IS NOT THE ONLY COUNTRY THINKING OF RECOGNIZING NORTH KOREA, THAT OTHER ASIANS WOULD FOLLOW SOON. FONMIN REPLIED ONLY THAT THE STEP PLANNED BY GOM WAS " NOT HELPFUL."

3. MOFA TOLD US THAT NEITHER PRESIDENT NOR FONMIN WAS MORE PRECISE AS TO WHAT STEP ROK WOULD TAKE IF MALAYSIA GOES AHEAD WITH RECOGNITION OF THE NORTH, BUT THAT ROKG HAS IN MIND " SUSPENSION" RATHER THAN BREAKING OF RELATIONS. WHETHER ROK WOULD WITHDRAW ALL OF ITS MISSION IN KL OR LEAVE ONE VERY JUNIOR OFFICER HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED.

4. CHI SAID ROKG WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF USG WOULD CONSIDER WHETHER A FOLLOW- UP CONVERSATION BY OUR AMBASSADOR IN KUALA LUMPUR WOULD NOW BE HELPFUL. IF SO, MOFA WOULD NOT WANT OUR KNOWLEDGE OF CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT REVEALED. RATHER ROKG PREFERS THAT AT THIS TIME USG REFER ONLY TO ITS UNDERSTANDING THAT ROK HAS VERY STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT THE MATTER BECAUSE OF FEAR THAT IT WILL START A CHAIN REACTION IN ASIA WHICH WILL BE HARMFUL TO ROKG IN S- N DIALOGUE AND JUST BEFORE WHO AND UNGA VOTES ON KOREAN QUESTIONS. WE AGREED TO CONVEY REQUEST AT SAME TIME EXPRESSING ON PERSONAL BASIS CONCERN THAT ROKG MIGHT BE CREATING SITUATION IN WHICH A FEW MONTHS FROM NOW NORTH KOREA WOULD HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL AND ACTIVE NORTH KOREAN PRESENCE AND ROK WOULD HAVE NONE.

CHI REPLIED ROK DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT, APART FROM AUSTRALIA, OTHER ASIANS WOULD TAKE STEP IN NEAR FUTURE IN ABSENCE MALAYSIAN PRECEDENT STEP. THEY WOULD, ON OTHER HAND, BE ENCOURAGED TO RECOGNIZE NORTH IF GOM DOES. CHI ADDED HIS PERSONAL OBSERVATION THAT ROK " CANNOT REMAIN IDLE" ON THIS MATTER.

5. CHI ASKED THAT FOR PRESENT USG HOLD THESE DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY.
UNDERHILL

NOTE: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER ORIGINATORS REQUEST

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